

February 21, 2023

I am a retired Police Officer with 31 years of service. While a Police Officer I sustained four gunshot wounds in the line of duty. I am in favor of reasonable gun laws to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals and persons with mental illness.

I am opposed to HB 5653 – an “Act establishing an Excise Tax on Ammunition to Provide Funding For Community Gun Violence and Intervention Program Grants”. Recently, Correctional Institutions were closed. Millions of dollars were saved by closing these correctional centers, allowing some dangerous individuals on the streets. I feel the dollars saved by not incarcerating criminals should be used for these “Community Gun Violence and Intervention Program Grants.”

HB 5653 would impose a two-cent tax on each round of 22 caliber ammunition purchased and five cent per round on all other ammunition purchased. I feel this excise tax would impose an unfair and unnecessary burden on law abiding citizens of Connecticut. As you are probably aware, to purchase ammunition in Connecticut, one needs to possess a valid Connecticut Handgun Permit, Long Gun Permit, or Ammunition Certificate. This means that law abiding citizens, who have been vetted, would be bearing the burden of this new Excise Tax on Ammunition, and not the violent gun offenders.

I feel this new Excise Tax on Ammunition would result with law abiding citizens going to the gun ranges less often to maintain their levels of proficiency with their firearms. Presently, the cost of 50 rounds of 9mm ammunition is about \$15.00. The present 6.35% CT Sales tax is about \$1.00 per box of 50. The proposed Excise Tax would add another \$2.50 to a box of 50 rounds of ammunition (or 16.66%) to the cost of a 50 round box. It is not uncommon for people to fire 4 or more boxes each trip to the range adding \$10 or more to the cost each time a person practices at the range. This would mean a person would be taxed at more than 22% for their ammunition.

A recent newspaper article (Journal Inquirer, Jan. 28-29) quotes State Representative Greg Howard suggesting the prosecution of violations of current Connecticut Gun Laws. In the article, Howard quotes statistics from the Office of Legislative Research showing of 90 people charged with Illegal Purchase or Transfer of handguns in 2021 (which is a Felony), more than 93% of those cases were dismissed, or nolle, and not prosecuted. Why not prosecute people who violate present gun laws rather than burden law abiding Citizens?

Another newspaper article (Hartford Courant, Feb. 19) reported that Connecticut mayors went to the State Capitol to push for legislation to enhance bail and sentencing laws for repeat gun offenders. The article reported that statistical analysis of gun crimes showed “most gun criminals are chronic reoffenders who are committing second and third offenses while released

on bail. "The article goes on to say "gun criminals are a relatively small violent group with Felony records. They commit a significant percentage of gun crimes while free on bond and awaiting trial on other crimes, or while on parole, or probation after prior convictions and prison sentences, data shows."

During my 31 years as a Police Officer, I spent 22 of those working with Detectives and processing crime scenes. Often, while investigating serious crimes including gun crimes, the question was asked, "Who had been recently released from prison?" In many cases, it was found that when the suspect had been identified, they had a previous criminal conviction for a similar crime.

Rather than passing legislation, which would only burden law abiding citizens from exercising their Second Amendment Right, I feel Criminal Justice Resources need to be focused on repeat offenders, legislation should be passed to limit their release on bail, and adjudication of their cases in our Courts should be expedited.

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